



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Discussion and Direction Regarding Development Options for Private Property in the San Juan Canyon Proposed by Scott Piazza & Sherwood Design Engineers**

**September 9, 2003**

#### **Honorable Mayor and Council Members**

On August 20, 2003, the City received a letter and map from Sherwood Design Engineers (representing owner Scott Piazza) outlining a proposal to develop four existing lots with two dwellings and to conserve for permanent open space the remainder of the property. That letter and map are attached to this report. Staff has scheduled this item for discussion only; no development application has been submitted, and no action may be taken. Instead, staff and the proponent are seeking Council direction on if you wish to pursue a development agreement or similar accord between the City and property owner on the issues presented in the letter.

#### **Discussion**

Scott Piazza owns approximately 13 acres of land between Lower Lock Avenue and East Laurel Creek Road. Subject to the City's Lot Merger Program of 2001, Mr. Piazza's holdings were consolidated into four lots. Most of the area is designated HRO-2, but about 15 to 20% of the property is HRO-1. In both zones, one single family dwelling is permitted, subject to Design Review. In addition, the site may be subject to the hillside road standards, in the event that a road extension is required. (Whether or not such an extension is needed to serve future development cannot be determined at this time.)

Mr. Piazza and Sherwood Design Engineers propose a comprehensive development plan for the entire 13 acres that would allow the development of two dwellings and reserve a significant portion of the property as undevelopable open space. More significantly, they seek the Council's endorsement for such a plan in advance of filing a complete application.

Staff believes that the issue facing the City Council with this request is unusual, but fairly straightforward: Does the City wish to support the general outline of a development proposal in advance of receiving all the details of the application and project. The purpose of such an

endorsement would be to authorize staff and the developer to seek a more detailed agreement on the development plan, returning to the Council for approval of a Development Agreement or similar contract. Without Council endorsement at this time, the City's only response to the applicant's request for direction is that he file an application, submit all the plans and seek entitlement approvals from the Planning Commission.

Staff believes that the project has certain merits that the Council may deem worthy of early endorsement. As noted in the attached letter, the entire thirteen acres would be addressed, including retiring two of the four lots. A comprehensive conservation program is also proposed, including trails, public and private open space and vegetation management. Finally, the two dwellings would be located near existing development, minimizing the extension of roads and other services. While some of these items can be made part of any project (including imposition by City Conditions of Approval), the applicant's willingness to reconfigure the existing lot lines is an added advantage of this proposal over a standard application. That is, by consolidating the lots, it will be possible to cluster the housing, retire much of the land and, admittedly, reduce the applicant's development costs.

Finally, staff notes the Mr. Piazza has met with the San Juan Hills Canyon Preservation Trust and with surrounding property owners over the last two months to describe this proposal. Members of the Trust and neighborhood may appear at your meeting to provide additional comments.

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Recommendation:** Staff does not wish to proceed along the track proposed in the attached letter without the Council's support. We recommend that you receive the information offered by Mr. Piazza and Sherwood Design Engineers and any other testimony, and direct staff to either:

1. Establish a formal dialogue with Mr. Piazza and Sherwood Design Engineers and return to the Council with a draft proposal based on the outlines of their letter of August 13, 2003, or
2. Reject the concept and direct Mr. Piazza to submit a standard project application packet.

Attachments:

Letter from Sherwood Design Engineers (8/13/03)

Respectfully submitted,

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Craig A. Ewing  
Planning and Community Dev't Dir.

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Jere A. Kersnar  
City Manager